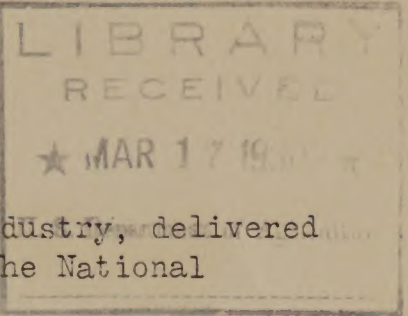


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TEMPORARY AND SUPPLEMENTAL PASTURES



A radio talk by Mr. E. N. Vinall, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered through Station WRC and 32 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, Thursday, March 6, 1930.

In almost every part of the United States there is some period during the year when the permanent pastures are less productive than at other seasons. It is impractical for the farmer to vary the number of livestock he owns to conform to his available pasturage. When he lacks pasturage, therefore, he must either provide harvested forage or allow his livestock to want for feed and lose in weight or in the production of milk if they are dairy cattle. The use of harvested feed such as hay or of soiling crops to supplement the permanent pastures during this period of low production is expensive and results in decreased profits or actual loss.

The profit in livestock operations, whether it be beef production or dairying, depends very largely on efficient use of pastures. Beef and milk produced on pastures costs little because of the low labor requirement in pasture operations. It is important, therefore, to provide in the form of pasturage as large a part of the year's feed supply as possible. The aftermath of hay meadows will often provide considerable grazing in the late summer. It is usually necessary, however, to devote some part of your cultivated land to crops especially fitted for grazing. Such crops may be cut for hay or used as green manure when not needed for pasture. If properly chosen they become a regular part of the farm rotation and contribute to an increased yield of grain.

The crops which may be used in this way depend on locality. In many parts of the Northeastern and North Central States sweet clover is proving to be a valuable supplemental pasture. It requires, however, a limestone soil or the application of sufficient lime to overcome any tendency to soil acidity. If these conditions are met, sweet clover is perhaps the most effective and useful plant for supplementing permanent pastures. Many livestock farmers in the Central West are depending on sweet clover for the major part of their pasture. A proper balance of first-year and second-year sweet clover will supply pasturage during most, if not all of the natural grazing season. The best time to sow sweet clover is in the late winter or early spring. Many seed it with spring grain or on top of fall-sown grain in January or February.

Another excellent supplemental pasture crop is Sudan grass. Cattle, horses, sheep, and hogs all relish a bite of this grass. Its habit of growth is such that it is most productive during July and August, a time of the year when Kentucky bluegrass pastures are ordinarily poorest. Whenever the Sudan grass is not needed for pasture it may be cut for hay. After it is cut growth is renewed and in a few weeks the Sudan is again ready to pasture. Keep in mind that Sudan grass is a warm weather plant and must not be sown before the soil becomes warm, usually in May.

Winter grains are widely and very effectively used for late fall and early spring pasture. Wheat is perhaps best, although rye is often used in this way, and in the South winter oats are available. Mixtures of winter oats and hairy vetch or oats and winter peas make excellent pasture in the Gulf States.

(over)

Mixtures of Sudan grass and soy beans or Sudan grass and cowpeas will supply splendid late summer pasture. Velvet beans interplanted in corn are very useful in the Gulf States as late fall and winter pasture and a separate field of kudzu will provide pasturage for limited periods during the summer months. This perennial legume grows luxuriantly on rather poor soil and when once established lasts indefinitely if utilized properly.

There are other crops which may fit into local conditions better than those named, but enough has been said to indicate how certain crops may be used to lengthen the grazing season or make it continuously productive and thus avoid expensive feed bills. In most instances the larger part of the pasturage should be supplied by permanent pastures. Temporary pastures such as I have described ordinarily cost more than permanent pasture but feed from such pastures is much cheaper than harvested forage. Temporary pastures are especially valuable in the production of hogs and sheep. Trouble with stomach worms in sheep is largely avoided when the pasture is plowed up and put back in cultivation at regular intervals. Crops like rape or mixtures of rape and oats are useful for both sheep and hogs because they make a rapid growth and produce large quantities of succulent feed. In Closing I want to suggest that you study your pasture needs in reference to your livestock and prepare to support them as fully as possible on pastures.

If you desire further information on these crops, write to the U. S. Department of Agriculture for Leaflet 23 on sweet clover, Farmers' Bulletin 1126 Sudan grass, 1437 Swine production and 1181, Temporary Pastures for Sheep.